

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND FORESTRY

2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard

Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4912

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2017

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Suzanne McCombs/ 405-421-3071/ suzanne.mccombs@ag.ok.gov

High fire danger setting up across Oklahoma

Oklahoma is officially in our winter fire season. This is a period where grasses and other fuels are dry, dormant and readily available to burn. Combine that with strong winds, low humidity and increasing drought indices and the state begins seeing increasing fire activity throughout the winter season.

Today and tomorrow are predicted to be two of those days and Oklahomans are being asked to limit outdoor activities that might spark a blaze. A generally dry pattern appears to be setting up and the highest fire danger today will be in western Oklahoma extending across much of southwest Oklahoma, up the western tier of counties and into the Panhandle; however, elevated fire danger will be present across much of the state.

Fire officials with Oklahoma Forestry Services (OFS) monitor several factors to predict potential bad fire days. “We have frequent discussions with National Weather Services, monitor drought and soil conditions and assess fuel conditions,” said Mark Goeller, OFS fire management chief. “In advance of predicted fire weather, we often pre-position task forces to be closer to the watch areas and have a quicker response time to work alongside local resources.”

“Tuesday will likely bring fire weather conditions that will bump fire weather watch or warning criteria in western Oklahoma and bring much drier fuel conditions to eastern Oklahoma,” said Goeller. “Sustained southwest winds around 25 mph are expected across much of the western half of Oklahoma with the strongest gusts – near 40 mph - reserved for southwestern Oklahoma. The entire state will experience high fire danger.”

Outdoor burning is discouraged and citizens are asked to report any new fires or suspicious smoke to the closest fire department. Safety of the firefighters and public is of the utmost concern and with this weather forecast one of the main threats for firefighters will be rapid spread of any fires that start. Stay aware of current wildfire conditions by reading our fire situation reports that are posted daily on Facebook and at www.forestry.ok.gov.

(MORE)

Note to Media: For the latest Oklahoma “Daily Wildfire Situation Report” visit www.forestry.ok.gov and click the link on the homepage (green box on right hand side.) The

report contains information about recent fire activity, predicted fire weather and a link for current burn bans.

About Oklahoma Forestry Services

Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, is committed to conserving, enhancing and protecting Oklahoma's 12.5 million acres of forests and woodlands. Since 1925, Oklahoma Forestry Services has worked with individuals and communities throughout the state to create resilient landscapes, fire-adaptive communities and provide wildfire response. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the division also has regional offices in Goldsby, Broken Bow, Wilburton and Tahlequah. For more information, visit <http://www.forestry.ok.gov>.

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